



The Virginia Saltwater Review

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Vol. 21, No. 15
October 12, 2007

by

Plans and Statistics Staff

OVERVIEW

The fishing reports are mixed, but the fall fishing season (with a few summer favorites held-over) has begun! Depending on whom you ask, spot are either big and abundant, or abundant but small. There are reports of blues, grey trout, speckled trout, and red drum being caught around the bay. The striped hunters are back on the prowl again, with most catches ranging in the 18 to 28 inch bracket so far. Offshore action is busy, with dolphin (still), king mackerel, big red drum, and wahoo. With the recent warm (HOT!) weather we have experienced, many anglers were anxiously awaiting the cold front moving through this week to give a final kick to the fall fishing action.

If you have not heard, there are new regulations for the fall striped bass fishery within the Chesapeake Bay for 2007. Do not be caught unaware, **go to page 9 for more details** about the fall striped bass fishery specifically, or to <http://mrc.virginia.gov/regulations/swrecfishingrules.shtm> for the most up to date listing of Virginia saltwater recreational fishing regulations.

And don't forget, the Virginia Recreational Assessment Program is in full swing now.

Get hooked and report your catches at www.vasaltwaterjournal.com. The Virginia Saltwater Journal provides anglers the ability to start compiling a Virginia recreational fishing database, with data provided by Virginia anglers, for Virginia anglers, that will assist VMRC in future fishery management issues. See page 7 for more details!

And remember, you catch it, you fillet it, but then donate the whole carcass to science. Participate in the Marine Sportfish Collection Project, earn a project tee shirt, and find out about the age and sex of your catch. See page 8 for more details and where to participate!

Wachapreague -

At Captain Zed's, large flounder were the primary catch reported this week, but speckled trout, grey trout, and croaker were reported as well. Sandler Sellard landed a 7 lb flounder on October 8th, and several other flounder were reported caught in the 5 to 6 lb range. Anglers have had luck working Milstone Creek, the Coast Guard Station, and Green and Drawing Channels. Offshore fishing has slacked off; however, last week Captain Bill Tyson reported a wahoo, and 15 small dolphin, on a single trip.

Cape Charles -

Mark at Chris's Bait and Tackle reported several speckled trout, (a 6 lb caught by James D. White and a 5 lb 3 oz caught by Randy Carlson) caught from the Oyster area on the seaside. Nice spot have been reported from the pier at Kiptopeke, and flounder are being found in the Cabbage Patch area. Speckled trout have been landed from both the bayside and seaside creeks.

Ernie of Cherrystone Bait and Tackle reported that speckled trout fishing has been slow this week, but he is expecting it to improve with the arrival of the cold front. Flounder are biting; however, most anglers have had to spend considerable time searching before landing them. Croaker are still available, but crabbing is beginning to drop off. Striped bass are expected to arrive soon with decreasing water temperature. A few small striped bass in the 19 to 20 inch range have already been reported. Citations for the week included an 8 lb 9 oz flounder caught by angler Ray Thomas from Erwin, North Carolina.

Onancock –

Captain Wil of Onancock reports croaker and spot catches of varying sizes this week. Grey trout have been landed in the 13 to 14 inch range and are typically found along the deeper water areas. Speckled trout are being caught along the shorelines, and in shallow water, puppy drum (juvenile red drum) have been landed. Striped bass have begun to bite but are still small (from 18 to 23 inches). Larger striped bass can be found by trolling, and casting, along the barrier islands and by fishing at night. A few dusky sharks and dog sharks have also been landed. Flounder continue to bite on the changing tides.

Lower Bay/Chesapeake Bay Bridge Tunnel –

At Cobb's Marina, flounder have been biting. On October 7, a 7 lb 15 oz flounder was caught at the 3rd island of the Chesapeake Bay Bridge Tunnel by angler Randy Price aboard the BLITZ. General fishing in the area has picked up lately as the strong winds have calmed down.

Most anglers leaving Wallace's Bait and Tackle are targeting spot. Citations for the week include a 3 lb croaker caught near the Amoco Factory in Yorktown, an 8 lb 2 oz (28 inch) flounder caught with spot (caught by Dennis Clark), and a 4 lb triggerfish caught with crab. Both the flounder and triggerfish were landed at the 3rd island of the Chesapeake Bay Bridge Tunnel.

Cindy at Sunset Boating Center reports numerous spot and a few keeper striped bass. She believes the delay in cooler temperatures is keeping many of the fall fish away.

At Salt Ponds Marina, inshore fishing has produced flounder and spot over the past few weeks, while offshore fishing has been primarily dolphin and wahoo. Citations include a 38 lb 4 oz wahoo caught at the Cigar by Capt. Tom Thompson of the ANGRY PIRATE, and an 8 lb 7 oz flounder caught at the Chesapeake Bay Bridge Tunnel by Wayne Coble aboard the KNOT WORKIN. An 8 lb 1 oz flounder (landed by Barry Bradley) and an 11 lb 2 oz sheepshead (landed by Capt. Jack Lawson) were both caught at the Chesapeake Bay Bridge Tunnel aboard the FATTY FLATTY.

According to staff at the York River Fishing Center, anglers are catching numerous spot, speckled trout, puppy drum (juvenile red drum), and striped bass in shallow waters. The best fishing seems to be in the York River near Gloucester Point.

Ken Neill, reporting secretary for the Peninsula Anglers Club, contributed the following:

Here we are in the middle of October and fishing is like the dog-days of summer. Offshore, we should be loading up with yellowfin tuna. Instead, we are loading up with dolphin hiding out under large mats of grass. A few tuna are being caught, but it surely is not fall fishing yet. Decent numbers of billfish are still around along with some nice wahoo. Anglers spending the night have a decent shot at catching a swordfish. Deep-droppers are coming back with good catches of sea bass, tilefish, and grouper. Inshore, the same kind of thing is going on. There are plenty of spot being caught but we have yet to see the run of big fish we have been seeing in past Octobers. It may happen in November this year. Some large croaker are hanging around in the York and James Rivers. Cobia have yet to leave us, and they are being caught by sight casters at the mouth of the Chesapeake Bay and along the Virginia Beach oceanfront. From the oceanfront on out to the Chesapeake Light Tower, there are schools of baitfish all over the place, and with these baitfish, you can find cobia, red drum, false albacore, king mackerel, Spanish mackerel, and jack crevalle. Flounder fishing has picked back up as the bay water has cleared from the recent blows. Nice catches have come from the Chesapeake Bay Bridge Tunnel and from the Cape Henry Wreck. Speckled trout are being caught on Poquoson Flats, in Back River and inside Rudee and Lynnhaven Inlets.

Dr. Julie Ball, IGFA International Representative for Virginia Beach, contributed the following:

Columbus Day weekend ushered in an overdue break in the weather, with many anglers taking advantage of the window of opportunity before the next front arrived. Most were rewarded with worthwhile catches.

The main event is the outward migration of flounder, as they gather to leave the bay. Anglers are experiencing good catches while drifting along channel edges, and other variations along the lower bay. Boats working the Cape Henry area are reporting 20 to 30 flatfish a day, with most ranging from 20 to 26 inches. The 1st island of the Chesapeake Bay Bridge Tunnel, the Small Boat Channel, Baltimore Channel, and the Thimble Shoals Channel are also producing decent hauls. Bayside Bait and Tackle reports that jigging the sloughs approaching Lynnhaven Inlet is enticing limits of sizable flatties, to about 5 pounds. Both inshore and offshore wrecks are also producing good numbers of flounder, while seabass are active on the more inshore structures.

To the relief of cobia hunters, a large school of cobia is swimming off the oceanfront as they stage for their final exit southward. Countless schools of big red drum are ravaging pods of bunker from Sandbridge down to False Cape. Many anglers are finding plenty of red drum action by casting into the schools. Big bulls are also taking anglers by surprise around the 1st and 3rd islands of the Chesapeake Bay Bridge Tunnel. Reports of king mackerel skying in open waters accented the excellent king bite this past week. Several smokers ranging from 20 to 40 pounds were hooked from Rudee Inlet to the Carolina state line, with several coming from the Little Island Fishing pier.

Although it is early in the season, anglers targeting striped bass are finding some success casting to schools ranging from 18 to 28 inches around the islands and tubes of the Hampton Roads Bridge Tunnel and the Monitor Merrimack Bridge Tunnel, especially at night. Plenty of bluefish are also in the mix. Lower bay inlets are also providing similar results. Danny at Ocean's East 2 reports he had good results with grey trout up to 5 pounds while casting chartreuse Gulp grubs at the rocks around Fort Wool this week.

Spot chasers are keeping busy with nice sized fish while awaiting the run of the big yellowbellies. Most are picking up all they want from the Monitor Merrimack Bridge Tunnel area, Ocean View, and the lower bay rivers and inlets. John at the Fishing Center reports that folks are loading up on spot within Rudee Inlet on the incoming tide, along with specks and puppy drum in the 1 to 4 pound range. Puppy drum are still going strong within the lower bay shallows, flats, inlets, and the Elizabeth River, where anglers are experiencing solid action on cut bait, live bait, and lures. Keeper sized speckled trout are available in the same areas for casters working lures and plastics, with the Poquoson flats producing good results.

Big croaker are thrilling hardhead anglers all over the lower bay. Fish measuring up to 19 inches are coming from the bayside rivers, the Lynnhaven basin, the Hampton Roads Bridge Tunnel, the Monitor Merrimack Bridge Tunnel, as well as the 3rd Island of the Chesapeake Bay Bridge Tunnel, and Fort Story.

Tautog action is turning on in the bay, where keeper fish were fooled by fiddlers and crab chunks off the islands and tubes of the Chesapeake Bay Bridge Tunnel this week. Trigger fish action is still off the charts, with many fish in the 3 pound range providing easy action for anglers on most any lower bay or coastal structure. Those trying their luck at the Chesapeake Light Tower are finding mostly small false albacore, snake kings, and some keeper Spanish mackerel. A few anglers are mistaking juvenile kings for large Spanish due to their yellow spots, so watch the size limits, a king must be 27 inches to keep.

While still waiting for the big yellowfin tuna run, offshore anglers are settling for decent wahoo action, and lots of gaffer sized dolphin hanging around endless weed lines. The few tuna coming in are big, with night-time chunking an effective method right now. An occasional blue or white marlin hookup is also a possibility. Sword fishing is becoming more popular, as overnights are becoming more common this time of year.

Virginia Middle Bay -

Roger Wilkins of Jett's Hardware reports that while the croakers have moved out of the area, Spanish mackerel can still be found at the mouth of the Great Wicomico River. However, he thinks that the next cold snap will probably chase them off as well. Filling in their absence are nice size fall spot and grey trout, which are starting to school up in the deeper waters. Spot will be hitting bloodworms, of course, and the grey trout can be found using jigs such as sting silvers.

Locklies Marina has seen several citation spot caught in the last few weeks with the yellow bellies starting to show up. The hot area for spot has been up around the mooring buoy of the Pickle Factory. Numerous bluefish are also being caught, from Tolls Point to Mosquito Point, with a six pounder landed this week. Some nice size grey trout, up to 3 ½ pounds, are showing up around the Silo, and striped bass and the occasional keeper flounder are also being landed.

Garrets Marina reports a slow fishing action right now with the bulk of the fish being caught on the bottom and a little further south due to warm water temperatures. Some striped bass are keeping the anglers busy, but as water temperatures cool down, the fishing should start heating up.

Capt. Jim Thompson of Deltaville, VA contributed the following:

The fishing is just too good to be true. You just need to be in the water, and the fish are on just about every oyster rock in the area. Let's start in the Piankatank River. Spot are now with roe and are feeding all the way up to Balls Point. Cherry Point is very active with large spot and mullet. Numerous trout come on the tide breaks. In the Bay, it's a no-brainer from the Corn House down to Deep Rock off Gwynn's Island. Just keep your bait fresh, and they will stay with you. Large spot, trout, shark, and mullet are also being landed. They will slow on the tide changes but not for long. In the Rappahannock, the Spike at the mouth of the river off Deltaville and Butlers Hole were the hot areas. The spot in the hole are a little smaller but very nice. One angler on my trip yesterday caught his limit of trout in 30 minutes at the Spike. Up the River, you will find fish at Number 7 Buoy and at White Stone on the east side of the bridge, but the ones at the Spike and in the Bay are bigger. There are also more trout at the mouth of the river.

Virginia Beach -

According to staff at the Virginia Beach Fishing Center, there have been a number of citations over the past few weeks. Charter boats have had numerous dolphin citations, an overnight trip by the BACKLASH produced four swordfish, ten yellowfin tuna, and a blue marlin. Inshore, numerous triggerfish citations have been earned this week, and anglers fishing near the beach at Sandbridge are earning release citations for red drum. Spot are still numerous in the inlet, and triggerfish and king mackerel are biting near the buoys in the Chesapeake Bay.

Virginia Piers -

At the Ocean View Pier, spot are biting in large numbers at night. During the day, a few (10 to 12 oz) speckled trout have been caught with some small flounder mixed in.

The fish are biting after dark at the Lynnhaven Pier. Anglers there are getting numerous spot, speckled trout,

puppy drum (juvenile red drum), flounder, and small striped bass. Large croaker have been caught and the spot are beginning to get larger as the yellow bellies begin to show. Most of these large spot have been caught at night.

The catch has been primarily small spot at the Virginia Beach Fishing Pier. However, several nice-sized pompano have been landed daily. Other catches include puppy drum (juvenile red drum) and the occasional Spanish mackerel. Flounder are biting, but there have been no keepers within the past few weeks.

At the Sandbridge Pier, king mackerel fishing was very productive at the beginning of the week. On Monday, 16 king mackerel were landed with 7 citations reported. Several red drum have been landed, and, while the spot remain small, they are beginning to pick up in number.

Outer Banks, NC –

Fishing in the Nags Head area has been limited to inshore waters and the sounds due to inclement weather over the past week. Offshore trips yielded only a few yellowfin tuna, dolphin, wahoo, and the occasional billfish. Closer to shore, at 5 to 10 miles, king mackerel could be found along with a few large red drum. Nearshore fishing produced limits of bluefish and some large Spanish mackerel. In the sounds, speckled trout and weakfish were the primary targets with on and off success. Some keeper flounder and small striped bass were also lurking around.

The Avalon Pier reported that bottom fishing was producing typical fall fare with spot, pompano, sea mullet and black drum hitting shrimp, sand fleas, and bloodworms throughout the day. Spanish mackerel and bluefish were working the ends of the piers and speckled trout were working closer to the shore with the best times being the evenings and nighttime. Several large cobia could also be seen patrolling the area but were not biting.

South of Oregon Inlet, the red drum run is on at the Point. Night fishing has been producing the best results, and several citation size fish have been caught. Bluefish are also working the entire length of the beach outside the breakers, and some Spanish mackerel were caught north of the Point.

The Oregon Inlet Fishing Center and Pirates Cove report that the weather has improved, and the offshore fishing charters have been producing good results. Dolphin have been the mainstays of the landings, but wahoo and yellowfin tuna were showing up further offshore. Closer to shore, king mackerel and albacore could be found. Bottom droppers were also having good luck with the tilefish.

People fishing out of Hatteras Harbor have also been experiencing the start of the fall run. Offshore boats report that dolphin, wahoo, and king mackerel have been available along with some billfish. Bottom fishing has produced tilefish, snowy grouper, and triggerfish. Those inshore fishing have caught puppy drum, bluefish, false albacore, gray trout, and sea mullet; so take your pick.

If you have additional information or would like further details contact Joe Grist at (757) 247-2237.

Please credit the Virginia Marine Resources Commission's THE SALTWATER REVIEW as the source of the fishing information.



ATTENTION SALTWATER ANGLERS! **The Virginia Marine Resources Commission** **announces the**



Virginia Saltwater Fisherman's **Journal**

The Fisherman's Journal is a new tool that is intended to benefit the individual angler, the fishing community, and fishery managers. It allows the individual angler to keep a record of their fishing experience that can be used to identify successful locations and conditions in the future. It allows the fishing community to share and learn about other anglers' experiences. Finally, it will benefit fishery managers by allowing them to assess fish populations by analyzing data provided by you, the recreational fisherman.

Get Hooked and Report at
www.vasaltwaterjournal.com

The screenshot shows a web browser window with the URL <https://www.vasaltwaterjournal.com/main.php>. The page header includes the Virginia Marine Resources Commission logo and the text "Virginia Marine Resources Commission Recreational Fishing Online Reporting". The main content area is titled "Recreational Saltwater Fishing" and "Welcome Virginia Fisherman,". It features a large graphic of a fish with the text "Virginia Recreational ASSESSMENT PROGRAM" and "FISH REPORT". Below this, there are two main sections: "Report Trophy Striped Bass" and "Saltwater Fisherman's Journal". The "Report Trophy Striped Bass" section includes a text box for "Regulation 4VAC 20-252-10 ET SEQ. requires all striped bass kept during the trophy season be reported. Recording your trophy striped bass catch in this system meets Virginia's mandatory reporting requirement." and buttons for "Report Entry" and "Reprint Trip". The "Saltwater Fisherman's Journal" section includes a text box explaining the system: "The Fisherman's Journal is a voluntary online reporting system. By recording your catch, you will develop a history of your fishing trips that may help you plan future trips by identifying successful locations and conditions. For each fish reported, you can decide if you want to share your catch data with other members. Additionally, you are helping the VMRC gather anecdotal data of species prevalence in the Chesapeake Bay. Your personal information will not be used or associated to the catch data. Lastly, you don't have to rely on your memory. You can complete this report form during your trip and then enter it online when you return." and buttons for "Journal Entry", "Reprint Trip", and "Reports". At the bottom, there is a "Search Public Data" section with a text box and a button.






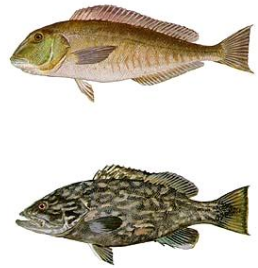



ATTENTION SALTWATER ANGLERS! THE VIRGINIA MARINE RESOURCES COMMISSION WANTS YOUR FISH.... TO MEASURE AND AGE



You catch it, you fillet it, but instead of throwing the remains in the trash, please donate them to science.

The Marine Sportfish Collection Project will focus on species of fish that are difficult to collect through the agency's normal sampling program. Anglers are asked to donate their filleted carcasses (head and tail intact) of legal and fresh-caught:

COBIA		RED DRUM	
SHEEPSHEAD		BLACK DRUM	
SPADEFISH		TILEFISH AND GROUPER	
TAUTOG			

In return for participating in the project, the agency will provide a FREE PROJECT TEE SHIRT TO EACH PARTICIPANT.

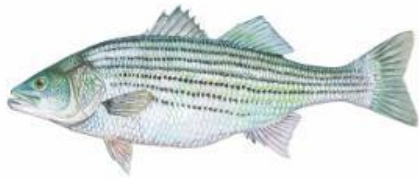
Please visit these bait and tackle merchants to participate:

Wallace's Bait and Tackle (Hampton)

Long Bay Pointe Marina (Virginia Beach)

Chris' Bait and Tackle (Capeville)





STRIPED BASS REGULATIONS FOR FALL 2007

<u>Chesapeake Bay Fall Season</u>	October 4 through December 31
Minimum Size Limit.....	18 inches
Maximum Size Limit *	28 inches
Possession Limit - October 4 through December 9.....	2 per person
Possession Limit - December 10 through December 31.....	1 per person

*** 1 fish of the 2 fish possession limit may be 34 inches or larger; no fish may be kept between 28 and 34 inches.**

Chesapeake Bay regulations for the Fall season described above apply in the main stem of the Chesapeake Bay and Virginia's Chesapeake Bay tributary rivers, **except for the tributary rivers emptying into the Potomac River (see note below for more information on Potomac River striper regulations).**

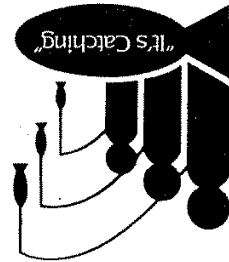
Other Virginia restrictions: You may not combine possession limits when seasons overlap or you fish in multiple jurisdictions. Gaffing striped bass or attempting to gaff striped bass is illegal in Virginia marine waters.

Federal water striped bass regulations: Atlantic Ocean waters beyond the 3 mile limit are closed to the taking and possession of striped bass all year.

Potomac River striped bass regulations: Different regulations apply in the Potomac River and its tributaries, including its Virginia tributaries. These areas are subject to the rules and regulations of the Potomac River Fisheries Commission, P.O. Box 9, Colonial Beach, VA 22443, (804) 224-7148; (800) 266-3904; <http://www.prfc.state.va.us>. For further information on PRFC rules contact PRFC directly.

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